



**MINUTES**

**Meeting:** COUNCIL

**Date:** 4th March 2019

**Time:** 7.49PM

**Venue:** NORTH WEALD LIBRARY, 138 HIGH ROAD, NORTH WEALD

**PRESENT:**

**Councillors (10)** A Buckley (Chairman) B Clegg, N Bedford, G Mulliner, T Blanks,  
A Tyler, R Spearman, Mrs A Grigg, B Eldridge, Mrs S Jackman, MBE,

**Officers in Attendance (3)**

Susan Deluca - Clerk

Adriana Jones - Principal Finance Officer

Joanna Tyler – Senior Administrative Officer (for part of meeting)

**Members of the Public (7)**

**Members of the Press (1)**

The Chairman welcomed Councillors and visitors to the meeting, and reminded those present that the meeting was being recorded, and that a member of the press was present.

**C18.086 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (4)**

*NOTED* that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Stroud, Bartram, Mrs Godwin-Brown and Stallan.

**C18.087 OTHER ABSENCES (0)**

No other absences were recorded.

**C18.088 MINUTES**

The Chairman reminded those present that there wasn't a meeting held in February, the last meeting being held on 7th January. The Chairman also confirmed that earlier that day he had received an email from a member of the public who was present at the meeting, raising a number of points within the minutes that he didn't necessarily agree with. The Chairman reminded those present that the minutes were for Councillors themselves to agree as a true reflection of the meeting in question. The Chairman invited the member of the public to briefly detail the items he was disputing so that Councillors could consider the points and either agree or disagree.

The resident introduced himself, advising there were two points he wished to raise, the first being about the pecuniary and non pecuniary register, advising that it was clearly stated on the agenda what the meaning was, but what he had said at the meeting was enquiring as to if there was a register of these interests held by the Parish Council and were available for inspection. The resident stated that this point had not been minuted. The resident advised that the second point he wished to raise that had also not been minuted was regarding the public involvement in the meetings, stating that at the meeting he had asked the question why he was obliged to follow the legislation when by example EFDC, ECC and the magistrates court in Chelmsford do not follow the legislation. The resident advised that he wanted this point to be minuted to reflect the fact he expects to be held to the same standards as other Council organisations. The resident advised that he was going on what EFDC

do, which is that they don't follow the legislation, whereas the Parish Council state that he does have to follow the legislation for these meeting, and he asked where it says he has to do that.

The Clerk confirmed she would note these points down. The Chairman asked Members if after noting down the points raised by the resident they were happy to accept the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 7th January 2019 and the Personnel Meeting minutes held on 25th February 2019. Cllr Mrs Grigg asked what the ruling was regarding minuting what members of the public say, asking how detailed these should be. The Clerk advised that it was her understand that verbatim minutes are not necessary, and that this Council normally take a note of the main points but not necessarily verbatim. Cllr Mrs Jackman stated that Declarations of Interest and what this means is quite clear on the agenda, and that Councillors don't necessarily have to declare exactly what the interest is.

Councillors **AGREED** the minutes, which were duly signed.

#### **C18.089 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Spearman declared a disclosable pecuniary interest with regard to item number 8 (Local Plan), advising that he owned a piece of land that is within the Local Plan, and that he would be leaving the meeting when the Local Plan was discussed. Cllr Mrs Grigg and Cllr Bedford declared an interest in items 8 (Local Plan), 9 (EFDC Offices Blenheim Way) and 14 (Debt of Honour) by virtue of being district councillors.

#### **C18.090 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

The Chairman read out a statement, confirming that the Council allows for 15 minutes for this agenda item, roughly 3 minutes for each member of the public. Members of the public were asked to indicate if they wished to speak by raising their hand and confirming their name and address if they were happy to do so, and asking that members of the public spoke one at a time. If the Council is unable to answer a specific question this evening, arrangements will be made for a written reply after the meeting. This ensures smooth flow of the meeting to ensure sufficient time is available for the agenda items to be addressed without getting bogged down in debate.

A resident advised that his question focussed on issues of the environment, stating that from the Parish Council website he notes that the Parish Council has made an Environmental Policy Statement, but that the council doesn't actually have an Environmental Policy, so the Parish Council does not tell the people of the village how it intends to improve on environmental quality. In addition, the resident advised he was concerned after reading in village life that there is a reluctance with the activity surrounding the use and future use of the library for the Parish Council to be stocking plastic recycling bags at the library, and asked if the Council would consider relooking at that policy and alter it so that people of the village can come into the library and collect recycling bags. The Chairman advised that this was complete news to him as recycling bags are stocked and available at the library, with a pack being given to the resident at the meeting. The resident advised that according to Village Life bags are not stocked at the library, to which Cllr Clegg

advised that the Parish Council is nothing to do with the Village Life publication and suggested the resident goes to the editor of the Village Life with this matter. The resident said not to shoot the messenger, and that this is the way the people out there perceive that bags are not available at the library. The Chairman suggested that the resident raised this direct with the editor of Village Life, to which the resident advised that if this was incorrect he would happily post this on the Village Life Facebook page, and asked for the days and times the library was open (details of which were given to the resident at the meeting). The resident thanked the Council, and asked if they would pursue the environmental policy document as the Parish Councils couldn't go around making statements with the amount of pollution and environment activity in the village going on at present, especially with particulate emission and gas emissions from the railway - something needs to be done. Cllr Bedford mentioned the Village Life article suggesting that perhaps the editor was referring to if the library was closed by ECC, no bags would be available, which would in fact be a true statement. It was noted bags were no longer available from the post office, but that they could be collected from EFDC offices in Epping and from both Bread and Bites and Bassett Pets in North Weald.

Another resident addressed the Council stating it was a follow up question, advising that he has an issue with public involvement at these meetings, stating that he has been attending Council meetings for a number of years and that he didn't feel that the Parish Council demonstrates that it actively wants any public involvement. The resident stated that there are a number of schemes that seem to appear out of nowhere, giving the example of the library stating that the first he saw about it was in December 2018, and now suddenly the Parish Council is putting an additional burden of £20,000 on Parishioners. The resident advised there hadn't been any public consultation, and that people turn up to this meeting and are constrained in what they can say, and that he has been told with regard to running meetings that the Local Government Act 1974 applies, however he has looked at that act and there is nothing in there that references control of meetings. The resident advised that he had completed a survey of a number of Parish Councils and that there seemed to be a plethora of ways you can run a meeting, and some of these Councils actually say they encourage members of the public to be involved. The resident stated that the Parish Councils website does state that members of the public are encouraged to be involved, however he doesn't see much evidence of this actually happening. The resident asked what legislation do the Parish Council actually run by, asking if it is the 1972 Local Government Act, and that it seems that the Chairman and the Council have the ability to flex this and do what they want to a certain degree, asking if this Parish Council want to have something that involved more of the public in what it decides to do. The resident stated that he understood the Parish Council has some core things it needed to do, however when it starts spending nearly £220,000 of public money he gets a bit concerned about it and doesn't see the value. The resident stated that this wasn't a personal issue against this council, confirming he has the same issue with EFDC and ECC who use very devious means to extract money from people - unlawful means. The resident stated he would like to see more public involvement, with more people at these public meetings, stating that people he has spoken to say they don't come because it is a waste of time. The resident stated that people feel the same way about the local plan, referencing Twitter feeds in which people ask what the point was in commenting.

Cllr Eldridge advised the resident that by virtue of the fact that he was present, he was a member of the public taking part and thus getting involved. The resident stated that with reference to the library, if the Parish Council wishes to burden the people with an extra £20,000, he hasn't seen a plan and he doesn't know what the Parish Council is trying to do, and there is no consultation. The resident advised he turned up to a consultation meeting where there was a load of them sitting around on some chairs, and he was told it was not a consultation meeting.

The Chairman intervened due to timing, stating that the numbers being bandied around by the member of the public were not accurate, confirming that he felt members had the gist of what he was trying to get across and that the Parish Council would get a formal reply out to him over the coming days. The response would include the Local Government Act and the relevant schedules. The resident accepted this response, and asked for clarification as to the 1972 and 1974 Acts, stating that there is freedom for the Parish Council to do what it wanted and the Parish Council was here to serve people, and that there are people who are paying a lot of money who are not given the choice as to whether or not they want to pay the money. The resident further stated that according to the legislation there is no obligation to pay Council Tax, and that he had raised this with the District Council whom he stated are committing fraud. The resident stated the Chairman could laugh all he wanted and advised that he has been in court about this. The Chairman advised that he was not laughing, stating that he taken the points raised and as stated would write to the resident with a response. The resident stated it would be nice if a response other than 'we are not going to change' was received, stating again that people don't come to these meetings as they feel it's a waste of time, referencing the amount of money the Parish Council was now charging people. The resident stated that he is getting people coming to him whom 5 years ago were calling him a nutter but are now saying to him 'what is he doing about the Parish Council' stating people were saying it was getting ridiculous - £20,000 for what. The Chairman again stated he wanted to call a halt on this point, referencing the written response that would be given.

Another local resident asked a question about the future of the library, and called upon the Parish Council to execute a feasibility study, with costs and a design that it proposed to put forward to the people of the village over the future designation of the library, stating that the feasibility was very important. The Chairman responded stating that the first thing to wait for was the results of the consultation undertaken by ECC as to what the people want, advising that he feels some residents may be confused as to exactly who completed the library consultation, confirming it was ECC and not the Parish Council. The Chairman stated that the Parish Councils job has been to ensure that as many residents as possible were aware of what Essex County Council is wishing to do with the Libraries, where this library stands in the Tier pecking order, and to encourage people to actually get on to the ECC website and fill in the consultation questionnaire, as if people don't have their say they cannot grumble if it doesn't go the way they would like it to go. The Chairman again confirmed the consultation was not the responsibility of Parish Council, and that the Parish Council took on the task of wanting to raise as much awareness as possible and offer assistance to residents if they needed help with the questionnaires. The local resident stated he commended the Parish Council as they have really worked

very hard to engage with the people of the village, except for the fact that they won't engage with the people who have different opinions to what the Council has, stating therein lies a problem in that it would seem if somebody has a different opinion they get shouted down, and that in a proper democracy people should be able to walk through the door and hold each one of the Councillors accountable. The resident stated that he was glad there was a resource here where he could come and ask for a feasibility study on the library, stating the Parish Council was spending expenditure on it and yet the Parish Council doesn't know what it wants. Cllr Eldridge stated that the Parish also included the villages of Thornwood and Hastingwood and was not just North Weald. Cllr Clegg stated that a feasibility study as to whether or not the library is a viable composition has absolutely nothing to do with the Parish Council, to which another local resident asked what the £20,000 was for then. Another local resident stated that Cllr Stallan had advised that he had earmarked £20,000 to remove asbestos from the library building. Cllr Clegg stated that it wasn't £20,000 that had been set aside, and that what monies were set aside were, as far as he understood, a contingency plan so that if the Parish Council is made homeless, there is the ability to go elsewhere, including remaining in the library and keeping it open.

Cllr Bedford stated that the reason the money was set aside was because as a Parish Council we are here to serve the people, that Parish Councillors were all unpaid volunteers, who meet in the library. The move to the library was part of an original cost cutting exercise from a number of years ago when the Parish Council was paying around £5,000 per year to use another hall, and we negotiated using the library facility on a peppercorn rent. This suited the Parish Council, but has also helped to maintain and keep down the cost of local council tax for residents. Cllr Bedford continued stating that what the Parish Council was trying to do was set aside funds so that the Parish Council can carry on maintaining and provide the service that we do for the residents of North Weald Bassett. Cllr Bedford stated that as volunteers Councillors didn't attend these meetings to get shot down in flames, but to actually try and help people, and that there have been accusations of the Parish Council spending money willy-nilly, however confirmed that budget meetings were held, money is duly allocated for spend throughout the year for various projects that benefit the people of this Parish. Cllr Bedford gave the example of volunteer litter collections being carried out by Councillors from this Parish Council, and that everything that is done is for the benefit of the people of the Parish. Another local resident asked if the Council has actually asked the people of the Parish as to if they want a library, or this or that, as he has never seen it. The resident continued stating that this was Cllr Bedford's opinion, and that he was entitled to that opinion, and that all he was saying was that there is another opinion which is that he, as a resident, doesn't agree with it.

The Chairman advised the local resident that he didn't feel the Parish Council was ever going to get him on side, to which the local resident stated that if the Parish Council keeps acting the way it is there are dozens who feel the same way as him. The Chairman advised that the Parish Council very rarely gets dozens of visitors, or people writing in about such issues, to which the resident stated that it was because people see it as a waste of time. The resident advised he had never had a Councillor at his house, to which Cllr Bedford stated that it was impossible to visit his house as

it was a gated development, and despite being there in the past and ringing the bells he was unable to gain access, to which the resident stated that people can just stick things through the gates, however Cllr Bedford stated that he would then be accused of littering. The Chairman thanked those members of the public for their comments.

Another member of the public advised he was present to represent Epping Youth, and after speaking to a number of people had been advised he should approach the Council. Epping Youth are expanding, and has approximately 40-50 players in North Weald and Thornwood, however they are running out of pitches on which the children can play football. The member of the public asked the Council if it could make use of the grass at Thornwood Common by way of a hire arrangement. The Clerk confirmed she had spoken to the Chairman of Epping Youth, and had asked if a list of the number of children from this Parish who play for Epping Youth could be provided, which he confirmed he would do. This was brought up at the recent Parish Hall at Thornwood Committee meeting, at which there was some concern as to this proposal. The Clerk confirmed that the Hall Committee does not have control over Thornwood Common, and stated that the main concern was the lack of drainage at the pitch. The member of the public accepted this, and stated that this was an issue at most pitches, along with rabbit holes. The Clerk confirmed she had asked Epping Youth Chairman to put together a proposal that can be put to members at the 1st April meeting for members to consider.

The Chairman thanked the members of the public for attending, and confirmed that a response would be sent to the second speaker as agreed.

#### C18.091 CLERKS COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

Members **NOTED** the report of the Clerk which was tabled at the meeting.

| Date        | Reported By or Action Initiated By      | Regarding                        | Action Taken                            | Further Action Taken  |
|-------------|---|----------------------------------|---|---|
| JAN/<br>FEB | PFO                                     | NPSG                             | MASTERPLAN,<br>LEAFLET OTHER<br>NP DOCS | ONGOING   |
| JAN/<br>FEB | CLERK                                   | FIRST<br>REGISTRATION<br>OF LAND | Ongoing                                 | LIASING WITH SOLICITOR &<br>ARCHIVE RESEARCH PARTICULAR<br>EMPHASIS ON PARKING SPACES<br>AT ADJACENT TO WEALD<br>COMMON |
| JAN/<br>FEB | SENIOR<br>ADMIN<br>OFFICER<br>/CLERK    | PARISH HALL                      | Various Actions                         | Including Maintenance Issues/Various<br>Matters / Storage container & Garages   |
| JAN/<br>FEB | CLERK AND<br>SENIOR<br>ADMIN<br>OFFICER | QUEENS HALL                      | VARIOUS<br>ACTIONS                      | VARIOUS MAINTENANCE<br>MATTERS ARISING FROM Annual<br>Inspections – DISTRIBUTION OF<br>GRANT APPS                       |
| JAN/<br>FEB | PFO/CLERK                               | ALLOTMENTS                       | ALL SITES                               | Various Matters – INCLUDING<br>GRANT APP AND RAISED BEDS  |
| JAN/<br>FEB | CLERK                                   | PLAY AREAS<br>MPF &<br>THORNWOOD | ONGOING                                 | GRANT APPS PLAY EQUIPMENT<br>FINALISATION OF EQUIPMENT  |
| JAN/<br>FEB | PFO                                     | LOCAL PLAN                       | EFDC LIAISON &<br>PLANNING              | VARIOUS ISSUES  |

|   |                            |  |                            |         |
|---|----------------------------|--|----------------------------|---------|
|   |                            |  | INSPECTOR                  |         |
| JAN/<br>FEB   | SENIOR<br>ADMIN<br>OFFICER | ECC LIBRARY<br>CONSULTATIO<br>N                    | ONGOING                    | ONGOING |
| JAN/<br>FEB   | CLERK                      | CORPORATE<br>GOVERNANCE/<br>POLICIES/<br>PERSONNEL | UPDATING AND<br>REVIEW     | ONGOING |
| JAN/<br>FEB   | SENIOR<br>ADMIN<br>OFFICER | ANNUAL<br>PARISH<br>ASSEMBLY                       | INVITES TO<br>ORGANISATION | ONGOING |
| ITEMS RECEIVED WHICH MAY BE OF INTEREST   |                            |  |                            |         |
| Various EFDC Agendas, North Weald Village Life, Various Periodicals, ICCE 1/4LLY MAGAZINE, RCCE OYSTER MAGAZINE |                            |  |                            |         |

Cllr Mulliner asked for an update on the parking spaces at Weald Common, to which the Clerk confirmed she was awaiting an update from the Councils solicitor with regard to documentation from Peer Group. It was hoped this would be available within the next month. With regard to the first registration of other land, this was now almost completed. The Clerk also advised that with regard to Thornwood Common, there was information concerning a wayleaf going back to 2002, possibly concerning electricity cables, that was awaited. Cllr Mulliner stated that he thought cables also go under the ground just beyond the parking spaces near Weald Common. Cllr Mulliner asked what sort of research was being undertaken, to which the Clerk advised that all parties were trying to source the documentation which goes back to 1999. Cllr Mulliner suggested perhaps the Village Hall may have these documents and that he would look for these if necessary.

#### **C18.092 REPORTS AND MEMBERS REPORTS**

**a) Chairman's Report** – The Chairman advised that it was discussed at the last Environmental Committee meeting that the local scouts would like to assist with the planting of bulbs throughout the village, and that he had arranged with the scout leader to meet on 25th March to go through which areas would be best, probably being around the village sign area. The Chairman confirmed that the new storage container for Thornwood was due for delivery this week, and that a weeks notice would be needed for delivery and a crane to swing over parish hall. The Chairman would arrange for a date that this can be delivered when the hall was not in use.

**b) Vice-Chairman's Report** – Cllr Eldridge reported litter and flytipping continued to be a problem along all the roads in Hastingwood, which he has consistently reported to EFDC however this has not been removed to date. EFDC had advised Cllr Eldridge that litter picks were completed every two weeks, which Cllr Eldridge disputed. EFDC had also advised Cllr Eldridge that rubbish could not be taken out of the ditches as these were not in EFDC's ownership, however this seems ridiculous. Local residents do undertake regular litter picks, however this cannot continue indefinitely. The Clerk confirmed she would email EFDC to chase this up.

**c) District Councillors Report** – Cllr Mrs Grigg advised that EFDC would be submitting a planning application for 10 hectares of employment land which is identified on the Local Plan at location NWB.4 - the area that was shaded at one time

for possible housing however was not allocated as such in the local plan. A tiny part of the airfield land is also included.

Cllr Bedford referenced that Epping Forest Youth Council had given a presentation to EFDC, and that leaflets should be circulating around the library about their work. Cllr Bedford suggested that perhaps at some point in the future they could be invited to give a short presentation to this Council. Epping Youth address issues that are relevant to the youth of today including mental health, nitrous oxide canisters, drugs, and the general problems of the youth of today. Cllr Mrs Jackman advised they would also be giving a presentation to the Epping Forest Local Liaison Committee on Monday 11th March.

Cllr Bedford advised that in support of Cllr Eldridge's report on litter, there had been a general increase in litter being dropped across the district, including 1 tonne bags being dumped out of the back of vehicles. Cllr Bedford suggested a letter should be written direct to the leader of the Council and the new Chief Executive expressing this Council's concerns and the problems we are experiencing, and ask them what their proposals are for reducing the amount of fly tipping and how much enforcement was going on. Cllr Bedford stated that there is a proposition that has been put forward as part of the Business Rate Review Retention Scheme funds in that could they be used to address the added burden of both district and parish councils on litter clearance and fly tipping. This may assist the District in obtaining Government funding. This was **AGREED**.

**d) County Councillors Reports – None**

**e) Parish Councillors Reports -** Cllr Bedford reported that there are proposals to completely resurface the full length of Bassett Gardens. Cllr Bedford advised that he was also a little concerned that the Talbot roundabout has just been resurfaced, however there are already markings ready for somebody to dig it up again.

**f) Queens Hall Report -** The Clerk reported that there were a couple of issues that she was currently addressing, and that she would be attending the next meeting to address these issues.

**g) Neighbourhood Plan**

A copy of the Neighbourhood Plan booklet was tabled, and Councillors were advised that copies were currently being posted through the doors of each and every house in the Parish. 48% of residents responded to the questionnaire which represents the views of just under 3,000 people. The Neighbourhood Plan steering group, all of whom are volunteers, have been working extremely hard, giving up a lot of their time to support and work on this project. This is vital evidence towards the Neighbourhood plan, and a period of evidence gathering now intensifies which ranges from national to local policy, all of which will be brought together to inform some draft policies, vision and objectives for a Neighbourhood Plan. Members noted that there was also a large group of local volunteers who had hand delivered these booklets, and thanks were recorded for those individuals. Cllr Tyler thanked the Steering Group for their hard work with both the questionnaire and getting to the point where the results had been formulated into a booklet for residents to understand and



review. The Chairman stated that it was a first class report, and for the Steering Group to have received a response rate of 48% was outstanding. The Chairman referenced the library within the booklet.

Cllr Mulliner reported that within Village Life, somebody had written a letter begrudging the fact that the Parish Council has decided to spend money on a speed gun, however the feedback from the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire states that 54% of the people in North Weald Village have concerns about speeding traffic. This was also of concern to both Thornwood and Hastingwood residents.

Cllr Bedford stated that it was interesting to see in the feedback that only 6% of residents do not have a vehicle, however the emphasis now on development, specifically the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town, is a modal shift to get you out of a car and on to cycle ways and bike routes.

Cllr Eldridge advised that there were now 6 volunteers for the Speedwatch programme in Hastingwood. Cllr Clegg advised that he had been liaising with Safer Essex, and they are waiting for the specific locations to be selected by the Speedwatch members so these can be assessed for suitability. Cllr Clegg has liaised with members of the speedwatch programmes in Thornwood and Hastingwood, and is awaiting a response from the North Weald team. Cllr Bedford advised that there was only one place in North Weald that was identified as being suitable, and that was near Skips Corner. Cllr Clegg advised that if a number of locations can be put forward, the Police will come and do the sifting. The Chairman advised that some training had already been completed, and that the z-bends in North Weald village were a problem. It was agreed that if at the very least this has an effect on the speed through the village, this would be money well spent.

A resident in the public gallery stated he wanted to raise a point of order, suggesting that the time of use of the gun should be considered, to which the Chairman advised that this was an ongoing process and that these issues would all need to be addressed as part of the process which will be discussed.

Members noted that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group had been successful in receiving a second round of technical funding via Locality for the creation of a Design Guidelines Document. This document has now been finalised after months of work, and is a review of the entire Parish looking at what is important in terms of design guidance for the area, and will also feed into the Neighbourhood Plan and will be used to assist in the creation of policies. This document will also be used potentially by developers in the future to consider as part of their designs for housing in the Parish, and sets out what, in terms of design, is important for the area. A copy was tabled for members, and it was confirmed that a copy would be available on the Parish Council website from the following morning.

Cllr Bedford advised that there have been recent discussions with regard to developers planting trees on estates and new developments and not fulfilling on this promise. Cllr Bedford suggested that the issue of trees is one that should be considered as part of the original design of new development.

### C18.093 LOCAL PLAN

#### a) Dates of Hearings

Councillors were reminded that the Local Plan Submission Version was under examination by the Planning Inspectorate, and that these hearings could be viewed online via the EFDC webcast. The issues addressed so far include Legal Compliance, Context Vision and Objectives and Sustainable Development, Place Shaping and General Masterplan Approach, Quantitative requirements for development, Spatial Strategy, Distribution of development, having been discussed. The Parish Council originally requested attendance at 10 of the hearing sessions, however have only been allocated slots on Day 12 (15th May) policy P6 and P11 which is Thornwood and North Weald, and Day 15 (23 May) Matter 14 Infrastructure and Delivery. The Parish Council raised concerns as the plans' soundness on the basis of delivery of infrastructure, and this was based on feedback from residents concerned as to the amount of development coming this way, and that there was no clear plan for infrastructure. Subject to agenda item b, this will be the main issue raised by this Council.

#### b) Formal appointment of Legal Representation for Parish Council representation at Local Plan Hearings

The Clerk confirmed herself, the Chairman and Cllr Mrs Grigg met with Rob Jameson at Attwater Jameson Hill with regard to formal representation at the Local Plan. The cost of representation, including all preparation and meeting time and attendance at both hearing days will be £5,700 plus VAT. Councillors **AGREED** this appointment, **PROPOSED** by Cllr Mrs Jackman, and **SECONDED** by Cllr Clegg.

### C18.094 EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES – BLENHEIM WAY

Councillors were reminded that Epping Forest District Council is proposing to build Offices at a site on land owned by EFDC at Blenheim Way. The Parish Council is being consulted on whether they feel that they would like to be involved if the District Council considers building a purpose built Office, Meeting Room, and possible Library for the Parish Council within that complex. Councillors were reminded this comes at a time when both the Parish Council Offices and Library are under threat. The Clerk has received an email from Georgina Blakemore – Strategic Director at EFDC, a copy of which was read out at the meeting. The Clerk confirmed she had seen an initial draft copy of the plans, and that what the Parish Council would be offered was quite small. It was noted that whatever was built would be in perhaps three or four years time, and that it would form part of the masterplan exercise for the Airfield. The Chairman confirmed a brief meeting had been held with himself, the Clerk and an officer of EFDC, stating that it was important the Parish Council displays some interest in getting some provision for the Parish Council, albeit not necessarily on an ideal site location, and that this would not commit the Parish Council. Cllr Blanks asked if this was the same site as Cllr Mrs Grigg referred to earlier in the meeting, to which Cllr Mrs Grigg stated it was not. The Chairman stated that the advice so far from EFDC was that staff for this newly proposed building would park on the airfield. Cllr Mrs Jackman advised that this Council should maintain its interest in this building, until at such time we are clear what is happening with the library building in North Weald. This was **AGREED**.

### **C18.095 FINANCIAL REPORTS**

#### **a) List of Cheques & Monthly Statement of Accounts**

Councillors **APPROVED** the lists of payment which were made up to the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019 and **NOTED** the account balances at the end of the month. Cllr Bedford enquired as to the Parish Council reserves asking if the Parish Council was on target to have what we were supposed to have, to which the PFO advised that the level of Council reserves were dependant on the size of the Parish, but that this Parish was well within the required parameters. Cllr Bedford also enquired as to the cost of interments, to which it was confirmed you needed to live within the Parish to benefit from residents fees. Cllr Mrs Grigg congratulated the Clerk on receiving significant grants from the Parish Council for play equipment and funds to support the Queens Hall. Cllr Mrs Jackman asked that this was mentioned at the Annual Parish Assembly.

#### **b General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) - standing item**

Due to Staff Annual Leave, Library Consultation and Staff Absences due to illness, limited work has been carried out. However, a concerted effort will begin after the end of the ECC Library Consultation (21<sup>st</sup> February).

#### **c) Internal Audit**

Councillors **NOTED** the report from the Internal Auditor copies of which were attached at Appendix 3 of the February Agenda for Members Perusal.

### **C18.096 POLICIES & PROCEDURES, STANDING REGULATIONS & FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

Members were reminded that it was agreed these would be readopted annually at the February meeting. Full copies of these were attached to the February agenda. The Clerk confirmed that a couple of housekeeping changes were needed to the Standing Orders. This was **AGREED** by Councillors, and it was **AGREED** any suggested updates to these policies would need to be with the Clerk by the 1st April. A number of Councillors advised the Clerk they had mislaid the Policy Documents, therefore the Clerk advised she would recirculate this with the April Agenda. The Clerk advised that each year Councillors were asked to confirm if they were happy to receive paperwork electronically which, historically, Councillors have stated they were not happy to do. Councillors confirmed they would still like to receive hard copies of Agendas, Minutes and documentation.

### **C18.097 ECC LIBRARY CONSULTATION**

The Essex County Council Library Consultation working group has now met twice. Both County Councillors have attended meetings, and there have been meetings between various people and the Chairman and Clerk. Alex Burghart MP met with a group of residents and Councillors, and this afforded an opportunity for Mr Burghart to be advised of how the Parish Council was engaging with residents and local groups regarding the consultation. Councillors and Staff were present in the Derek Tringham Lounge, North Weald Village Hall, on Saturday, 9<sup>th</sup> February between 11am and 2pm, with residents in relation to needing any assistance with the survey and any views that they had regarding the Library Consultation which ended on Thursday, 21<sup>st</sup> February.

The Chairman confirmed that the working group had agreed that work should take place to try and publicise the consultation as much as possible by raising awareness. This was done by way of using Everything Epping Forest, social media, Village Life, to ensure residents were aware they had an opportunity to have their say. Unfortunately, the consultation responses initially had to be completed electronically, and many residents were uncomfortable or needed assistance with this, so the Parish Council offered a service of assistance with this. The Chairman was hoping that when the responses came back for North Weald, it would show a healthy number of residents who took part.

Cllr Mrs Jackman said that during the consultation, a member of ECC Library services was present at North Weald library to assist residents with the consultation, and that she had asked this individual how community libraries works, however was advised that she was not prepared to discuss this until the end of the consultation period. Cllr Mrs Jackman stated that this was not very helpful.

Cllr Bedford suggested a way forward could be that a FOI could be written to ECC asking how community libraries are anticipated to be run. The Clerk confirmed that herself and the Chairman had been to see Finchingfield Community library. The Chairman advised that a number of volunteers had already put themselves forward to assist with the running of a community library.

#### **P18.098 REQUEST FOR PEDESTRIAN CROSSING**

Members were advised that the Parish Council had received a letter from Norway House, advising of concerns following an accident outside that location and requesting support for a pedestrian crossing. A copy of this letter was attached to the agenda. The Chairman advised that this came to a head around the Christmas period when one of the young residents was knocked over when crossing the main road by Pike Way. Fortunately, the car wasn't travelling particularly fast as it had just come out of the Museum turning, however if the vehicle was coming the other way this could be a very different story. The Manager of Norway House would like the Council to consider the installation of a road safety crossing at this location, as with over 70 under 16s currently resident at Norway House, this can be a precarious job for them to cross the road. The Chairman had already advised the Manager of Norway House that this issue should be progressed via the Local Highway Panel scheme.

The Clerk read out the letter from the youth who was involved in the incident, and confirmed that she had a list of over 30 signatures supporting the idea of a crossing at the junction of Epping Road and Hurricane Way.

Cllr Clegg asked as to the feasibility of installing a pedestrian crossing in this position, reminding members of the challenge previous Cllr Collins had in securing a crossing outside the shops. The Clerk stated it took over 3 years, and that £45,000 had been secured by the Parish Council in grant funding towards this work. Cllr Clegg stated that there was no question in his mind that this had to be supported, however was simply raising awareness of the complexities of securing such a crossing. Cllr Tyler agreed, stating he also supported such a crossing. Cllr Bedford asked if a feasibility study could be conducted by ECC as to this crossing, by which time potentially some S106 monies could be available to fund the project. Cllr Mrs

Jackman suggested the letter from the affected youth should be included with any LHP request. The Chairman suggested this could be raised at the Annual Parish Assembly. Cllr Mrs Grigg confirmed she would support this, but enquired as to the process going forward in terms of the LHP, suggesting that County Councillor support may also be needed. The Clerk confirmed she had ECC Cllr Jackson's support already, and discussion took place as to whether or not Cllr Whitbread's support would also be needed. Cllr Mrs Grigg asked if a specific location was being put forward, as some time ago there were two fatalities along this stretch of road and it may be worth mentioning this. After further discussion, it was **AGREED** this should be put forward as a LHP request, with a package of information in support.

#### **P18.099 DEBT OF HONOUR**

A copy of a letter regarding the Debt of Honour had been received from Arthur Moreton who has forwarded it to the Parish Council. Members were reminded that the Debt of Honour is under the control of the District Council. The Parish Council has written to the District Council on a number of occasions regarding transferring ownership and maintenance of the Memorial. The Clerk confirmed she had spoken with Derek Macnab, EFDC, asking if a response was to be received, and shortly after she received a letter from Mr Noble from EFDC Legal Department which confirmed that the Debt of Honour would be handed over to the Parish Council, to which the Clerk had stated this could not be done until such time as the urgent repair and maintenance works had been completed which was what the PC had advised. Derek Macnab had subsequently spoken with the Clerk and confirmed he would either meet on site with the PC, or confirm that the works had taken place. The Clerk advised that there was potential that another charity may be willing to take on the management of the Debt of Honour, and that Arthur Moreton was pursuing this.

#### **P18.100 NORTH WEALD DOCTORS SURGERY**

Members **NOTED** that the Clerk had been making continuing enquiries regarding the progress in relation to the re-opening of the Doctors Surgery in North Weald, however had not had a response at this time. A copy of the email from the Limes was attached to the agenda which stated that the North Weald Surgery is almost ready to open. Cllr Mrs Jackman stated the lack of response from the Limes was disappointing, and should be followed up. The Chairman agreed that it had been some considerable time since the last update, and that this seemed to be taking forever. Cllr Mulliner advised that he thought there had been some consultation between Hanover and the District Council with regard to parking, to which the Chairman confirmed that he had advised the Limes that parking was not a Parish Council issue. It is understood that there are still parking concerns from residents, and that residents should be advised to contact Epping Forest District Council regarding the possible introduction of a Residents Parking Scheme. Cllr Mrs Grigg advised that a meeting was scheduled to be held at Wheelers Farm Gardens on 6th March to discuss a possible parking residents scheme. Cllr Mrs Jackman suggested a copy of any correspondence was sent to the Senior Partner at the Limes.

#### **P18.101 GRANT APPLICATIONS**

Members **NOTED** that the Parish Council had been successful in the following grant applications for the year 2018 – 2019 (**TOTAL OF £28,337**):

- CIF - £11,000 Play Equipment at Thornwood & Memorial Playing Field

- CIF - £9,087 Queens Hall Charity
- EALC - £7,000 Local Services Fund (3 year Funding)
- Stansted Trust - £250 Remembrance Item
- Armed Forces Covenant Trust - 6 Silhouettes- Armed Forces Covenant Trust (no monetary equivalent)

In addition, the Parish Council has been awarded a minimum of £1,000 in another Grant Funding round for the Memorial Playing Field play area, and this could possibly increase to £4,000 if the Parish is successful in the Peoples Voting by way of the Tesco Bag Scheme. Cllr Tyler referenced the Co-Op in North Weald who also give to local charity, and perhaps they could be made aware of local charities they could give to. The Clerk suggested Cllr Tyler confirmed with the Co-Op that they do give to local charities, and that this could then be included in the Annual Report. Cllr Tyler also advised that the waste bins and flower baskets had been stolen during daylight hours.

#### **P18.102 DIARY DATES**

- Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> March – Annual Allotment Meeting
- Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> March – Annual Parish Assembly
- Civic Award Nominations – closing date: Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> March . There had been 19 nominees in total.

#### **P18.103 THORNWOOD VILLAGE OPEN GARDENS EVENT**

Members *NOTED* that the Clerk had received a request from the Thornwood Open Gardens Committee to once again open the Allotments to the Public on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June between 11am – 4pm and hold the same event as last year (when the event raised £3,700 for St Clare's Hospice). The Hall is not needed, however there may be some use of the Car Parking. Councillors *AGREED* to this request.

#### **P18.104 ECC PASSENGER TRANSPORT MEETING**

Members *NOTED* that the next meeting of the Epping Forest & Harlow Public Transport Meeting is to be held on Thursday 13 June at Epping Town Council Epping Hall, St John's Road, Epping. Time to be confirmed. This Parish Council doesn't have a specific representative, so Councillors were asked to advise the Clerk if they wished to attend.

#### **P18.105 HASTINGWOOD VILLAGE HALL**

It was *NOTED* that the Parish Council agreed to provide Hastingwood Village Hall the sum of £11,150 from the S.106 Brent House Farm Monies, £800 of which was originally set aside for an additional 20 chairs, however The Committee would like to use these funds instead to provide an additional 'Concrete Disability Compliant Parking Pod'. Some funds have been received from EFDC however there is a shortfall of approximately £800 to provide this pod. Trustees believe that this would be a more effective use of the money at the current time. This was *AGREED* by members.

#### **P18.106 NORTH WEALD LIBRARY**

Whilst to some degree this was discussed earlier in the meeting, Members formally noted that the ECC Library Consultation closed on the 21<sup>st</sup> February 2019. The Parish Council has completed, and submitted, the Expression of Interest Form to Essex

County Council, and has now received further notification from EFDC regarding the Asset of Community Value. As Members are aware the Parish Council has not carried out its own Consultation, as the Members felt it was not appropriate to carry out a consultation at the same time as ECC's. However, within the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Groups booklet (where a general consultation was held with residents within the Parish on various issues) it can clearly be seen under Leisure Facilities, that the fourth most used Leisure Facility within the Parish was the Library. Therefore taking this on board, and with a 48% response rate, it would be far more economical for Council and residents to utilise these figures. The next steps are expected to be as follows:

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|---|--|
| Meeting with Volunteers Who Have Expressed An Interest in Running a Community Library | Friday 1 <sup>st</sup> March – North Weald Library<br>At 10.30am         |
| Next Meeting Of the Working Group to Decide the Way Forward                           | Monday 18 <sup>th</sup> March<br>Following the Planning Meeting          |
| Meeting with ECC Susan Barker and Cllr Jackson  | Letter from County Cllr David Finch Refers as was attached to the agenda |

The Chairman confirmed that the Expression of Interest submitted to ECC was to confirm that the Parish Council would be willing to run the library as a Community Library, for the benefit of the local community. Cllr Bedford advised that other libraries in Essex who are threatened with closure are putting forward ideas of having accommodation perhaps above a library building that could be rented out and used to fund the continuation of the specific library. Cllr Bedford advised that with a structure such as North Weald Library, the building would probably need to be flattened and rebuilt to facilitate such an idea, but this was perhaps something to consider. Cllr Bedford stated that his only concern would be that ECC completed the consultation, and then closed the libraries anyway, and that if this happened the Parish Council should be putting forward their position as Caretaker Status for the premises so that the Parish Council offices could continue to run until new premises or an alternative suitable location was found. Cllr Bedford's concern that the building could end up being empty, and that it was beneficial for both parties that a presence should be maintained.

Cllr Clegg expressed his concern that this Parish Council may have already shown its hand which could simply result in ECC passing it on to the Parish Council, to which the Clerk advised that on the Expression of Interest you were required to indicate if you would be willing to take over running the library as a community library. Cllr Mrs Jackman suggested the offer of Cllr Jackson arranging a meeting with Cllr Barker should be taken up.

Meeting closed: 21.31 pm

Signed .....

Date .....